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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#) [KJUS](#) [DR](#) [JIMENEZ](#)
RADHAMES)
SUBJECT: CALL ON NEW DOMINICAN ATTORNEY GENERAL RADHAMES
JIMENEZ PENA WITH BIO

¶1. (SBU) On August 22, Ambassador Hertell, accompanied by DCM, poloff, NAS, RSO, and representatives from DHS, FBI, USAID, and the U.S. Marshals Service, met recently sworn-in Attorney General Radhames Jimenez Pena in a one-hour courtesy call also attended by members of the media. Jimenez, who lacks significant prosecutorial experience, was accompanied by senior deputy attorney generals charged with facilitating U.S.-Dominican legal cooperation. Discussion was cordial but largely limited to set-piece presentations: the Ambassador expressed hope for continued bilateral cooperation, stressed the importance of fighting corruption, noted U.S. interest in denying "safe haven" to former Nicaraguan president Arnaldo Aleman, and offered general support for any measure that would strengthen or reinforce programming in these areas. Jimenez, in turn, emphasized continued bilateral cooperation and described his principal focus as accelerating efforts to combat corruption, narco-trafficking, and trafficking in persons. Jimenez spoke not of his legal experience in describing his bona fides, but rather noted his close personal relationship to President Fernandez, stating plainly, "We are brothers" (somos hermanos). In a separate follow-on press conference which has resulted in much local media play, Jimenez pledged to fight corruption "in all its forms public and private" and Hertell described drug overflights in the Dominican East as originating in Venezuela.

¶2. (SBU) Comment. The inclusion of the press during the entirety of a bilateral meeting in the Dominican Republic is sufficiently rare to require comment. Despite a history of exceedingly good cooperation by the Attorney General's Office of former AG Francisco Brito, Jimenez apparently took pains to insulate himself from critical comments during this first official meeting by including members of the media. As Jimenez should have known that there were no explosive issues hanging over from the departure of his predecessor, one interpretation could be that his behavior showed a degree of unease, perhaps understandable, in assuming the reigns of this office without significant prosecutorial experience. If this was, indeed, the only issue, the Embassy can expect increasingly warm personal relations and continued bilateral cooperation as Jimenez moves through the settling-in period.

Biography of Attorney General Radhames Pena

13. (SBU) "We are neither friends nor office companions "we are brothers." With these words about President Leonel Fernandez, repeated on multiple occasions, Radhames Jimenez stressed the close personal relationship that strengthens his standing as Attorney General of the Dominican Republic. Fernandez opted for loyalty, trust and professionalism above other attributes in the selection of his Attorney General. Jimenez lacks the strong prosecutorial background and public respect which his predecessor Francisco Dominguez Brito enjoyed. Despite this, his strong legal background, reputation for honesty, sound managerial skills and promises to continue the policies of his predecessor suggest that he will be effective.

14. (U) Jimenez joined the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD) in 1979 and was elected to the party's Central Committee in 1998. During his tenure with the party, he has held the offices of Sub-Secretary for Electoral Affairs, Secretary of Judicial Affairs, and Alternate Political Delegate to the Junta Central. Under his direction, the firm Fernandez and Associates defended four PLD officials from Fernandez's first term in office, whom the Mejia administration had formally charged with misuse of funds in a program for employment generation (PEME). He didn't have a lot to do. The Mejia administration contracted private lawyers to carry on the complaint, and nothing further was done; under the current Fernandez administration those lawyers were dismissed and no one replaced them.

15. (SBU) Jimenez has signaled his intention to continue the policies and reforms of his predecessor. He has highlighted as his personal priorities the need to confront narcotics trafficking, trafficking in persons, prison reform and corruption. Attorneys and support staff working in the

Public Ministry say their initial impressions are favorable -- Jimenez took great pains to meet all of his staff and listen to their concerns immediately upon taking office. When the Ambassador called on him a week after Jimenez was sworn in, the new AG acknowledged his country's excellent working relationship with the U.S. Government and his intention to continue it.

16. (U) Jimenez may also bring some new priorities to his position. He authored the book "Environmental Law and Ecological Crime." He has publicly spoken of his intent to enhance the special office of the Prosecutor for Environment, situated within the Justice Ministry.

17. (U) Radhames Jimenez was born on February 10, 1961 in La Sabana de los Jimenez, in the province of La Vega, in the center of the country. He received a doctorate in law in 1985 from the Universidad Autonoma de Santo Domingo and began his professional career in the law office of Dr. Abel Rodriguez del Orbe. He indicates that Leonel Fernandez recruited him and worked side-by-side with him. In 1995, the two left that office to found their own law firm, which Jimenez managed after Fernandez won the Presidency in 1996. Jimenez remained as senior managing partner until this year. Jimenez is divorced and the father of at 12 year old boy, Nicolas. He has limited knowledge of French (largely legal terms) and is not conversant in English.

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